

Le May, H. W.  
War warbles

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# War Warbles

BY

H. W. Le MAY





Poetry  
Not in Waters

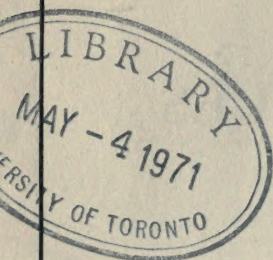
# WAR WARBLER

H. W. Le MAY

"Miserere!"

*Right or wrong, I portray in song  
Things as they seem to me.  
Your thoughts and mine may not entwine  
Sometimes we shan't agree  
Remember, God, who made you wise,  
Also created me.*

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The following poems have appeared from time to time in "The Mail and Empire" and "Toronto Daily Star." It is with their permission that I now publish them in this form.

H. W. LE MAY.

83 Salisbury Avenue,

Toronto

• July, 1917.

DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO  
PATRIA MORI

Sweet it is and honor there is  
For the fatherland to die,  
But from ancient Rome to the River Somme  
Is a far and distant cry.  
Maybe the thought was cheaply bought  
Amidst Maecenas' wines,  
But if Horace could write to-day, dear lads,  
He'd underline those lines.

If men could die in days gone by  
For the soil that raised their seed,  
Should our young men shirk their country's work  
In the hour of "patria's" need?  
"Civis Britannicus sum" we boast,  
But the bonds are slender bines.  
If Horace could live to-day, dear lads,  
He'd underline his lines.



# WAR WARBLER

## THE R. F. C.

Sweeping high through a leaden sky  
The sons of Daedalus go;  
Reckless they, as Icarus gay,  
In the days of long ago.  
But now their wings are steel-clad things,  
No wax their flight betrays;  
Their day's work done, they flout the sun,  
And go their several ways.

But whether in storm or sunshine,  
Whether in fog or haze,  
Whether the aircraft guns are out  
Or the bi-plane's maxims blaze;  
Whether the enemy's three to one  
Or whether the pastime pays;  
Till the old 'bus happens to loop-the-loop,  
They go their several ways.



THEY ALSO SERVE

My lady sits in her high-backed chair,  
My lady's face is pale;  
They've told her, her viscount son is dead,  
No droop as yet of her haughty head,  
But her eyelids tell their tale.

The seamstress stitches her wedding gown,  
Love and hope on her brow,  
Little she knows that her lover, who  
Was to wed her when next his leave is due,  
Has left on his long leave now.

The widow kneels in the chapel dim  
(God! 'twas her only son)  
Striving hard in her dreadful pain  
To mutter the words her lips would frame  
"O Lord! may Thy will be done."

The outcast goes on her way alone  
Despised and shunned by all,  
She has vowed a vow to mend her ways  
For one, who was in happier days  
The cause of her utter fall.

Mother or maid, or wife or wench,  
Serve in their silent pain,  
While Man, such a careless dolt is he,  
Throws them a rose or a kiss maybe.  
And goes to his wars again.

# WAR WARBLER

## BRITANNIA!

Justice, Truth and Freedom  
Met by chance one day,  
(It was, oh, so long ago,  
When? I couldn't say).  
But this they agreed on  
They would found a home  
Where they three supreme should be  
And rule by right alone.

They chose some tiny islands,  
In Northern Seas inset,  
(And as I claim them my lands  
I know they rule there yet).  
Justice, Truth and Freedom,  
Shall sway the world some day,  
Perhaps not yet, but don't forget  
That Britain showed the way.

# WAR WARBLER

## BELGIUM

Where the old Scheldt pursued its peaceful way,  
Bearing your produce fresh from field and loom,  
Where one could bask in ancient cities gay,  
Or hopyards steeped in bloom—

The bugles sound! The nations are at war,  
You, in their path, kept each from throat of each,  
Freedom demanded time, a month or more,  
You stepped into the breach.

And now when looted town and severed dyke  
Prove, to a watchful world, your sacrifice,  
Purged by your blood, your cities wake, and like  
Phoenix, once more arise.

## LA BELLE FRANCE

What shall I say to you, Madame?  
What can I say to you?  
If letters could spell all I would tell  
You would not deem it true.  
You fought us fair (what fights they were),  
Agincourt, Waterloo,  
A votre très bon santé, Madame,  
That's what I say to you.

We're comrades now, no matter how  
We quarreled long ago,  
And side by side, whate'er betide,  
We'll face our common foe.  
From Verdun grim to Hell's mouth brim  
We've proved you staunch and true,  
Britain's salaam to you, Madame,  
That's what I'll say to you.

## WAR WARBLER

### "ROUMANIA"

Descendants of the she wolf's cubs,  
    'Twould be unnatural quite;  
If when your Latin cousins struck  
    You should refuse to strike.  
Your forbears plowed by Tiber,  
    Your legends reek of Rome,  
See now that when your legions fight  
    They drive the Magyar home.

By Romulus and Remus!  
    (From whom you get your name),  
By Jupiter and Venus!  
    Or vestal virgin's flame!  
Should you not strike for freedom  
    When chance of vengeance comes,  
'Gainst those who trace, to their disgrace,  
    From grim Attila's Huns?

And should your sons' endeavors  
    Weigh down the scales of Mars,  
In favor of the justest cause  
    (If there be cause for wars)  
Why then let every glory,  
    That clung to Rome before,  
Be reproduced in story,  
    "Roumania at War."



TO SERBIA

We would not leave you in the lurch,  
Whatever statesmen say;  
Whoever trusts in Britain once  
Shall never rue the day.

The flag that's braved a thousand years  
Still stands for right and might.  
What eagle ever stood a chance  
With a lion, roused to fight?

Were I possessed of untold wealth,  
I'd stake my share therein;  
I'd stake my all, I'd stake myself,  
On Britain's power to win.  
The darkest night precedes the dawn;  
Wait but a month or two,  
When Britain's hand has purged your land  
She'll hand it back to you.

RUSSIA

(1915).

Russia, mighty Russia, land of Muscovy.  
Little known outside her zone, wrapt in mystery:  
Twice they tried to crush her; twice they tried in vain;  
Moscow's flames once spoilt their aims,  
And now they try again.

Groping, ever groping, out towards the light,  
Hoping, always hoping, right will conquer might,  
Once we turned against you (Alma, Inkerman),  
Bruin dear, the slate is clear;  
The bear walks like a man.

GERMANY

Her science haunted every land,  
Her ships sailed every sea.  
All that mankind could understand,  
Of literature and music grand,  
All that her men of commerce planned,  
Belonged to Germany.

She staked all on a single throw,  
(Was e'er such gamble known?)  
The world will never, never know  
What madness bade her prudence go,  
Of if 'twere one man willed it so,  
to lose . . . his soul and throne.

## WAR WARBLER

### THE WRITING ON THE WALL

The loathsome Teuton in days to come  
May warble his hymn of hate,  
But the khaki gunners behind the gun  
Will stifle its note ere it's well begun,  
And end it sooner or late.

Nor hate nor plea can save them now,  
For the British bugle call  
Peals out, "Come on, they started the row,  
They asked for the steel, they shall have it now."  
And echo cries, "Forward all."

From the Baltic shore to the land of Greece  
The allied lines advance,  
Wave upon wave, they'll never cease,  
While a million men to follow these  
Are waiting "somewhere in France."

The day will come when they'll curse the name  
Of the Hohenzollern brood,  
The day when their cities go up in flame,  
And the flags of nations they sought to tame  
Shall stand where their eagles stood.



TWO MEN

(July, 1915).

The world was good to live in, lad,  
Only a year ago.  
You were a good three-quarter back,  
Good with an oar also;  
Now you've found your grave o'er the ocean wave,  
At the hands of a brutal foe;  
Whoever dreamt of such devilment  
Only a year ago?

The world has changed since then, lad,  
At a tyrant's nod, we know;  
His word gave birth to hell on earth,  
Only a year ago.  
His name shall stink in history's sink,  
As the ages come and go;  
For that man, too, was counted true  
Only a year ago.

When the graves give up their dead, lad,  
And the last dread trumpets blow,  
I wouldn't be that man, lad,  
For God is just, we know.  
But I would give my all, lad,  
To stand up with that row  
Of heroes all who answered the call  
Only a year ago.

## WAR WARBLER

### THE CREW OF ZEPPELIN L-19

When you flew by night in the waning light o'er  
England's eastern shores,  
And made red hell of dale and dell and Derby's  
peaceful moors,  
With never a thought for the death you brought to  
helpless babe and maid,  
Did you wait to the end to help attend the victims of  
your raid?

Then why this whine when caught in the brine that  
guards Old England still?  
Shall our trawlers help the jackal whelp returning from  
his kill?  
Murder our coast-bred bairns and boast or gloat if your  
press desires,  
But don't, when down and about to drown, implore aid  
from their sires.

MESOPOTAMIA  
"OMAR REDIVIVUS"

Methinks that once my footsteps oft did tread  
The selfsame soil which covers British dead,  
A race I knew but very little of,  
Yet, good companions, I have heard it said.

Thus in my ancient land their spirits pass,  
Nor grief, nor prayer can bring them back, alas!  
But ye who now surround the festive board,  
For absent ones turn down that empty glass.

And when at last upon the world is peace,  
And bitter strife and bickerings shall cease,  
And your turn comes to make your bow and go,  
May you depart as worthily as these.

## THE DAY OF RECKONING

There is a murmur arising now,  
Gathering strength each day.  
For treaties broken and Belgium's pain,  
For Rheims' cathedral and sacked Louvain,  
For bloody murder on land and main,  
Somebody's got to pay.

No patched-up peace will we tolerate  
(Let rulers say their say).  
The thousand crimes we must leave unsaid,  
Scarborough's women and London's dead,  
And murder that comes from overhead,  
Demand their price some day.

Then here is the oath each Briton takes  
Before the world to-day:  
"For all of the Lusitania's dead,  
For the day when Edith Cavell bled;  
Aye! for each hair of her martyred head,  
Some one, by God! shall pay."



## WAR WARBLER

### TO A LITTLE CANADIAN BOY

Oh! daddy's wearing a khaki coat  
Instead of his suit of tweed,  
We'll let him go, for well we know,  
He comes of a fighting breed.  
When he comes back safe and sound,  
After knocking the Germans silly,  
He'll bring a helmet, I'll be bound,  
For his little boy called Billy.

Now you've heard, of course, of "The Wooden Horse,"  
That captured the Town of Troy,  
If you haven't you ought, because I thought  
It was known to every boy.  
But you soon will learn, when dad in his turn  
Sends you a card, and tells  
Of Ilium's fate brought up to date  
In the modern Dardanelles.

And you, my lad, can help your dad  
In the trying days to come,  
It's up to you to be brave and true  
And guard the home and mum;  
For this, my son, you can take from me,  
Wherever you chance to roam,  
Nine out of ten of all the men  
Fight for a woman at home;  
For men must fight and women must weep  
Forever and ever, Amen.  
So when you play, just think of the day  
When you'll be one of the ten.

## WAR WARBLER

### THE RETURNED HERO

I'm twenty-three years old to-day,  
And I wish I'd never been born.  
I've lost a leg and half an arm,  
And the other one's all torn.  
But I've seen what I've seen  
And I've been where I've been,  
So, there, I mustn't complain;  
If the same old call could come to all,  
I guess I'd join again.

Never to handle a horse or gun,  
Never to row or run,  
Never to bid for wife and kid  
Or know a grown man's fun.  
But I stabbed three Germans in half an hour;  
That's more than some men can claim,  
And given the same old bayonet charge  
By God! I'd do it again.

Yes! it's nice for the major of forty-five,  
Or the colonel of fifty-three,  
To tell their sons how we took the guns,  
But what do you think of me?  
Twenty-three years old to-day,  
And life's such a long, long lane;  
They say all lanes have a turning, nurse,  
Will you turn me over again?

## WAR WARBLER

### "CARRY ON"

"Carry on!" roars the sergeant-major,  
"Carry on!" cries the colonel, too,  
"Carry on!" is the song as the boat swings along.  
    'Neath our lads in navy blue.  
"Carry on!" cries the long-range gauger,  
    As he waits impatiently.  
From high in the sky comes the airman's reply,  
    "Carry on! Carry on!"

"Carry on!" sounds the young boy bugler,  
    As a bullet ends his note.  
"Carry on!" cries his pal, the corporal,  
    Though a sob chokes in his throat.  
"Carry on!" says the blue-eyed maiden  
    (She has done so in her time),  
With patience and skill in her ward see her still,  
    "Carry on! Carry on!"

"Carry on!" sobs the stricken mother,  
    Though her tears fall thick and fast,  
Carry on to the end and the right defend,  
    It's sure to prevail at last.  
"Carry on!" cries the dead man's brother,  
    For he has not died in vain,  
Though loved ones may fall there is one cry for all,  
    "Carry on! Carry on!"









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Le May, H. W.  
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